

## HOW TO COMMENT ON A TEXT IN A STRUCTURED WAY

### 4 STEPS:

- 1) INTRODUCE the text
- 2) GIVE AN ACCOUNT of the text IN YOUR OWN WORDS.
- 3) COMMENT on the text
- 4) CONCLUDE

### STEP 1: INTRODUCTION

Avoid banal, uninteresting introductions like *\*\*This article was written in The Guardian and dates from June 2006. It deals with global warming.\*\**. A better approach is:

- **Date AND Context** : There should be a context or an allusion to a current (=present) or past event :  
*"In a world where/ At a time when ..... , this document invites us to reflect on ...." "The article was published right after... / just before... / following the controversy caused by..."*
- **Theme + type of article** (factual article / leading article / editorial / column = op-ed = opinion piece / review)
- **Source (+ political angle)**: *"This opinion piece about conservatism is taken from The Daily Telegraph, which happens to be the traditionally Conservative British daily." / "This American column from The New York Times provides an interesting US perspective on Anglo-American relations."*
- If relevant (= pertinent), **author/writer**: *"This leading article tackling in vitro fertilization was written by Professor Matthew James, a researcher in this field."*

### STEP 2: ACCOUNT / REPORT

#### DOS

- select** the most salient (=important) facts and implications.
  - imagine that you will **report** the article to someone who has not read it: start from an important fact / significant statistic and explain what it means and what it implies.
  - use the selected elements to build a **plan** and account for the text in a structured way. The report should provide (=give) a very accurate (=precise) vision of the reason why it was written, what the facts/ideas are, what statistics or examples are used to highlight (=underline) these facts...
- Remember this logical order: FACTS → EXPLANATIONS → IMPLICATIONS (those given in the text)

#### DON'TS

- don't make a description of the article.
- don't read bits or sentences of the text one after the other (you can quote the document once or twice but the account is not a patchwork of pieces and phrases from the text).
- don't rephrase the article paragraph after paragraph nor report it in an extremely detailed and linear way.
- don't take more time to summarize the text than it would take to read the document (it is a summary!).

### STEP 3: COMMENTARY

- DO NOT REPEAT the ideas already expressed by the journalist.
- When you prepare, try to find the implications of the problem in other fields (=domains), in society, in history... This is the right moment to use your **general knowledge** and culture!
- express the **issue** and next the **arguments and counterarguments** that are linked to this issue, the reasoning and the various lines of approach to this question. Show that you have a clear understanding of the problem by expressing the various ideas in a structured way (link words are necessary here!)

To help you with this part, here are a few questions you can ask yourself:

*What does the text deal with and yet doesn't say about this invention/trend/concept/idea? (causes, consequences, solutions...)*

*Does it say anything that is contestable? Incomplete? Shocking? Controversial? If it does, why / what for?*

*How can I branch out / develop the themes that this subject evokes/hints at/is linked to? How can I give other examples, draw comparisons, etc.*

### STEP 4: CONCLUSION

You may **give your opinion**, now that you have given the various arguments about the issue. You can also **open up** / enlarge on a broader subject if relevant.